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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

To Principals of Collegiate Institutes, Vocational, High and Continuation Schools

Re Departmental Examinations in Grade XIII English Literature and Composition

1. THE ENGLISH LITERATURE EXAMINATION OF 1950

The following information in regard to the work of the candidates at the Grade XIII examination of 1950 in English Literature is presented in the hope that it may prove helpful to teachers of English in the secondary schools. It is to be understood that the allotment of marks to the several parts of the course and the comments upon the candidates' answers apply only to this Examination and that neither the scale of valuations nor the form of questions will necessarily be duplicated in future examinations in the subject.

The answer papers were evaluated on the basis of 100 marks which were divided as follows: Shakespeare—21; Longer Poems—20; Shorter Poems—20; Short Stories and Essays—12; *David Copperfield* or *Lorna Doone*—12; Sight Poetry—15.

I. FORM OF ANSWERS

It remains *important* that answers should be properly spaced, accurately numbered for parts and sub-parts, and written legibly. Quotations should not only be worked into sentences which are structurally correct, but should be identified as quotations by the use of quotation marks.

This year few students failed to complete their answer papers. Nevertheless candidates should be urged to make a reasonable distribution of time for all questions in order that they may be answered as directed. Unless such a term as "name" is used, candidates should avoid answers which are a series of sentence fragments. Such instruction as "identify", "briefly", and "in about fifteen lines" should be heeded. The candidate gains nothing by verbosity or irrelevant material.

Candidates who have had regular training in writing on formal examinations during the school year, not only in Grade XIII but also in the lower grades, are at a distinct advantage with respect to effective organization of their answers at a departmental examination in English Literature.

There are two basic drills students should be given in order that they may express effectively their knowledge of the texts. The first of these is in the reading and understanding of the questions themselves. Students should be trained to pick out the key words of a question. Proper analysis of the wording would prevent the laborious writing of "answers" which do not answer what is asked. Candidates fail to distinguish between a critical analysis and a summary. They often do not relate their material to the specific points raised or they give many details not required. Having made sure what the question requires, the student should then develop an answer well-organized and unified, beginning with a topic sentence which reflects the purpose and the meaning of the question. Teachers should continue to stress both these points—a careful analysis of the question: a thoughtful, well-organized answer. Too often answers were little better than jargon revealing slight appreciation for the meaning of words or the value of grammar. Sentences such as these were common: "Luke's character goes astray near the end." "Eunice gave up the boy and is happier to go back to her 'Moral Exigency'."

II. ERRORS IN SPELLING

In 1950 deductions to a maximum of five were made for errors in spelling. Too many candidates lost marks for spelling, and in some cases their errors were so serious as to suggest illiteracy. This reflects a need for thorough, careful teaching of spelling in every class and in every grade including Grade XIII. Poor spellers in Grade XIII may be helped by mastering the rules for spelling which can be found in many composition texts. Candidates could avoid some errors if they referred to the spelling on the examination paper itself. The spelling of plurals, of various verb tenses, and of the possessive was poor. In addition special attention should be devoted to the spelling of words particularly applicable to the

year's selections. The following words were among those most frequently misspelled on the 1950 examination: alliteration, altar, anapaestic, anecdote, appearance, because, buried, conscious (for conscience), courteous, denouement, despair, develop, dialect, disgusted, distinction, dominant, emphasize, equip, exaggerate, exercise, explained, finally, ghost, gullible, heartily, humorous, indifference, influential, its and it's, lead and led, loose and lose, marries, melancholy, messenger, metre, Michael, mortgage, occasion, occur, occurred, occurrence, of and off, opinion, opportunity, peasant, pentameter, perform, persistence, preceding, prophecy, prophesied, quarrel, receive, reference, referring, relieve, resemble (not ressemble), resistance, rollicking, rhyme, rhythm, sadness, seize, siege, significant, soliloquy, speak and speech, stoop, stubbornness, suspense, their and there, tragedy and tragic, tries, two, too, and to, weird, were and where, which and witch.

III. FAULTY USAGE

In 1950 deductions to a maximum of six were made for serious errors in usage. Teachers should continue to insist on answers, written or oral, in clear, correct English. Candidates should be made fully aware of the importance of good style and of the seriousness of poor sentence structure, bad grammar, lack of punctuation, and the misuse of words.

Common errors found on this year's paper included such incorrect expressions as: enthused, errored, had fell, had of acted, lay for lie, seeked, strived, weaved, if he would have had, *human* as a noun, nouns made by adding -ness to any adjective, nouns as verbs, *good* as an adverb, *like* as a conjunction, adverb clauses completing *to be*, the unrelated *which*, a noun followed by *and who*, lack of agreement between subject and verb, and sentence fragments. The most frequent of all sentence faults was the "comma splice". We do not expect Grade XIII candidates to express themselves in sentences like this, "His senses are like he has drank some opium". Slang expressions occurred more frequently this year. Phrases such as "had the nerve", "to tell off", "to call off", "would be a flop", "is not stalling", "hollered", "two-timing", and "wise-cracks" have no place in answer papers in Grade XIII English Literature.

IV. NOTES ON THE ANSWERS

Question 1 (a):

Name, or identify clearly, *three* important stages in the development of a Shakespearean plot.

(b) Show briefly the connection between each of these three

important stages and the career of the main character in the play by Shakespeare which you have studied. Illustrate your answers by definite references to the action of the play.

Many candidates revealed by their answers little knowledge of the structure of a play. The 1948 Memorandum suggested that Grade XIII students should know structure and terminology in reference to the short story. The point needs re-emphasizing. Structure and its terminology *are* important in any critical study of a play, a novel, a short story. The terms set forth in 1948 were: introduction, conflict, complication, climax, resolution, crisis, denouement, conclusion. Five stages are generally given as the divisions in a Shakespearean plot. In this question candidates were not required to use the technical terms but they did have to identify the three stages they chose. Part *(a)* could have been answered in a line or two. Part *(b)* required considerable development and accuracy. To obtain full marks the candidate had to make clear the connection of each of three stages with an important incident or phase of the career of the main character. These illustrations were to be definite and adequately developed. The commonest weaknesses were: a summary of the play, a division of the play into three parts with no reference to action but based on character or setting, a failure to identify the stages with the principal character.

In the answer which follows the student has given definite evidence of understanding the *stages* of a play. This candidate apparently knows that a summary of the play would not be the answer required; hence, he has not included incidents belonging to other stages. The material used has been carefully selected and clearly related following the requirements of the question.

(a) Three important stages in the development of a Shakespearean plot are the Introduction, the Climax, and the Denouement.

(b) Shakespeare introduces Romeo in the first scene of the play and by the discussion between Benvolio, Romeo's cousin, and Romeo brings out the fact that Romeo is a love-sick youth. He shows us that Romeo is still immature, and that he is not truly in love with Rosaline but only in love with love. He discloses, through Romeo's speech, the youth's nimbleness of wit, and underlying intelligence. Through the preceding quarrel between the servants of the houses of Montague and Capulet we are shown the strength of the animosity that prevails between these two upper class noble families. And this quarrel also seems to point out the underlying fate and tragedy that will result from the feud between these houses.

The climax of the play is the murder of Mercutio by Tybalt and the subsequent revenge by Romeo's killing of Tybalt. These two deaths, followed by the Prince's judgment that Romeo be exiled from Verona, show the truth of the fears and premonitions of Romeo, Juliet, and Friar Lawrence. The climax also serves to show the results of the feud between the two families.

In the denouement, or the final outcome of the plot, Romeo is dead, Juliet has stabbed herself and died, and Paris has been slain by Romeo. All this has happened because the Montagues and Capulets were too proud to stop their quarrelling.

Question 2:

What dramatic purpose is served by humble or relatively unimportant characters in the play by Shakespeare which you have studied?

Illustrate your answer by reference to *two* scenes or incidents of the play in which such characters have a significant part.

This question was answered well by a majority of the candidates. Even so, a more careful analysis of the question would have helped candidates to write more directly and concisely about the three points required—dramatic purpose, an unimportant character, a definite incident. Certain students failed to obtain any credit for their answers to this question as they chose *major* characters. Students also lost marks because they confined their illustration to *one* scene. In their answers candidates were given credit for reference to one general dramatic purpose or to two or more purposes such as linking characters or incidents, arousing emotion, providing relief by the use of humour or irony, furthering or impeding the plot. The answer following has dealt with the three points required quite adequately.

Lucius, Brutus servant, appears in the play mainly to emphasize the thoughtfulness and consideration of Brutus' character, and the esteem in which Brutus was held. Just before the final battle Lucius plays an instrument for Brutus although half-dead with sleep. Brutus does not awaken him. In the same scene Brutus apologizes to Lucius when he finds in a dressing-gown a book he had previously sought and presumably had accused Lucius of mislaying.

The poet who enters Brutus' tent to stop the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius helps to provide relief after the bitter disagreement by bringing a touch of humour into the

conversation and a change of atmosphere to release the audience from tense emotion.

Question 3:

Some village Hampden, that with *dauntless* breast
The little Tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute *inglorious* Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell *guiltless* of his country's blood.

(a) Describe briefly, in your own words, the *three* types of rural character to which Gray refers in these lines from the *Elegy.*

(b) Justify the author's use of the italicized words.

OR

Why write of trivial matters, things of price
Calling at every moment for remark?
I noticed on the margin of a pool
Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo sort,
Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange!

(a) What are the "trivial matters" to which Karshish, the writer of the epistle, refers?

(b) What does he evidently consider to be one of the "things of price"?

(c) Account for his high regard for such things.

(d) Explain clearly the deep significance of his concluding exclamation, "It is strange!"

Many students failed to obtain good marks on this question because their answers revealed only a vague and superficial knowledge of the *Elegy* and the *Epistle.* It is necessary to remember that *Longer Poems* are to be studied *intensively.* Again, other students lost marks because they failed to interpret the questions correctly. For example, some candidates revealed their misinterpretation of *3 (b)* by saying that Gray employed italics for the purpose of emphasis. Still others did not realize that "*Justify* the author's use of italicized words" called for more than mere definitions of the three words, "dauntless", "inglorious", and "guiltless". Not a few candidates misunderstood the option in question three; they evidently considered that the OR signified a choice between *3 (b)* first option and *3 (a)* second option. The following answers obtained high standing:

(a) As Hampden had refused to pay taxes imposed by the Tyrant, Charles I., so did this village fellow refuse to pay taxes to the lord who ruled these fields. He (the village Hampden) was probably a tenant on a lord's manor fields

and courageously refused to pay duties or tithes which he felt were not just, wrongly imposed, or too exorbitant.

A country fellow living in this village may have had capabilities for deep religious and poetic thought, equal to those of the poet Milton, but they were never used, perhaps because he remained uneducated throughout his life and therefore could not unlock the door to genius and let flow in writing the beautiful thoughts he held, or perhaps because he was too busy earning a living on his farm. He would be a rustic moralist.

Some rustic lad here may have had the qualities of leadership equal to those of Cromwell, the vibrant personality and dominating character necessary to command the sheep of the land to follow him. However he may have had to earn a living on his farm and found no time to enter into politics or war; besides, if he had, he would only have been an insignificant foot-soldier. Yet he may show in this little village his leadership by taking the lead in decisions made for them all. The mute Milton may have surprised others at rare moments with some beautiful thought and the village Hampden may have defied his lord in some petty detail.

(b) The village Hampden was dauntless because he stood up to the little Tyrant in a time when such a practice was unheard of, and therefore it took great courage to defy a greater person who could punish him severely.

The mute Milton was inglorious because he was mute. He never got the opportunity to show the world his beautiful thoughts and therefore remained unknown and unsung, whereas Milton did become known and glorious.

This Cromwell was guiltless of his country's blood because he never got the opportunity of using to the fullest extent his ability as a leader and therefore could not lead the country's people to destruction. At the time of Thomas Gray, Cromwell was considered a tyrant and a cruel leader. To-day he is more respected through his political accomplishments.

(a) The "trivial matters" spoken of by Karshish are the strange aspects of the case of Lazarus. He has just told Abib of this man who believes himself raised from the dead by God Himself, and his subsequent behaviour. He is not apathetic, yet is undisturbed by approaching armies or his child's sickness. However, things of little meaning hold tremendous import for him. His values are different for he has "knowledge increased beyond the fleshly faculty". He is "sudden to stare off cross-

wise", and, though firmly convinced of what he says regarding his resurrection, he does not attempt to make converts. He is robust, vigorous, and strong of mind and body; even the animals are attracted to him, yet merely his feet move on earth while his head and heart are in heaven. Karshish has been trying to explain the case to Abib, but has failed to do so successfully.

(b) He considers the "blue-flowering borage" abounding at the margin of a pool to be one of the "things of price".

(c) Karshish was a physician and was therefore interested in medical matters and cures.

(d) He was thinking of Lazarus and his story of being saved from death by God Himself, who is a God of love. He finds it difficult to believe or understand this and yet cannot forget it.

Question 4:

"Poetry deals with vital experiences; it should attempt to communicate a genuine emotion."

Discuss this statement in relation to EITHER Wordsworth's *Michael* OR Keat's *Ode to a Nightingale,* illustrating your answer by reference to the poem you have chosen.

This question, designed to test the candidates' appreciation as well as their factual knowledge, was well answered by the more thoughtful and mature students. On the other hand, many candidates did poorly because they tended to summarize the narrative or outline the thought of the poem. Still others neglected one of the key words—"experiences", "emotions". The following were among the better answers:

Ode to a Nightingale communicates to the reader a feeling of sombre brooding sorrow. Keats, having just lost his brother, and he himself being sick, feels a "drowsy numbness" and a pain at his heart. He envies the nightingale not because it is happy but because it can sing of happiness. Keats longs to be away from sorrow. He thinks of a "beaker full of the warm South" with its hidden merriment, dances of Provence, sunny climate and mirth, but casts this aside. He would like to identify himself with the nightingale and leave the cares and frets of mankind—feeble youth, sicknesses, old age, pining Love and fading Beauty. He travels with the nightingale not with "Bacchus and his pards" but "on the

wings of Poesie", to see the "Queen-Moon and her starry Fays". He seems to recognize the "white hawthorn and pastoral eglantine", the musk-rose and other flowers by their smell and his knowledge of their seasonable comings. As he travels "through verduous glooms and winding mossy ways," he thinks on Death as "darkling" he listens, "half in love with easeful Death". "Now more than ever seems it *rich* to die". His longing and sorrow increase as he recalls the "immortal Bird" who was not "born for death". He would be happy to fly and live with the nightingale always but this is denied him, for once dead his ears can't hear its songs. He broods over the history of the bird and then brings himself back to reality with the word *"forlorn"*. The bird's song disappears into the distance and he is left to wonder if he really heard it.

In "Michael" Wordsworth attempts to convey basic human truths as illustrated in a simple pastoral setting. The vital experiences dealt with are primarily Michael's intense love of land and family, especially his son, and his tragic sorrow when he learns of his son's failure. His love of his land springs from the fact that he associates his learning of the basic emotions of fear, love, courage with his care of the flock in the mountains. His love of Luke represents his hopes for the future, especially his hope that Luke will live the simple useful life which his ancestors lived, and which he has lived. His reaction towards his son's failure shows the valuable sustaining power of a second love in enabling him to bear the tremendous sorrow.

In Michael, Wordsworth appeals to the conviction of solidarity in dreams, joys, sorrows, illusions and aspirations that is common to all men. He appeals to our sense of pity, as we see Michael in his intense sorrow. A deep feeling of pain is aroused in the reader at the simple picture of Michael, sitting beside the sheepfold, his head bowed in sorrow. Amidst this dominant emotion of tragedy, the emotion of love and kindness is always present. In Michael's reproachful glances towards Luke, the child, we see parental affection illustrated vividly.

Question 5:

Choose any *two* of the following poems and compare them with respect to

(a) the attitude toward war which they reveal,

(b) the nationality to which they refer.

(c) the effect of the rhyme or the metre employed,

(d) the effectiveness of the diction.

Pibroch of Donald Dhu (Scott); *The War Song of Dinas Vawr* (Peacock); *The Destruction of Sennacherib* (Byron); *The Battle Autumn of 1862* (Whittier); *Boot and Saddle* (Browning).

The answers to this question were, as a general rule, rather poorly presented in that the word "compare", in many cases, was entirely overlooked. For instance, many candidates chose one poem, answered (a), (b), (c) and (d), and then chose a second poem and answered (a), (b), (c) and (d). Obviously the student was not drawing any comparison in such cases, and the answers were penalized accordingly. Tabulation was not considered adequate for full marks but words and phrases such as "similarly", "whereas", and "on the other hand" were accepted as satisfactorily indicative of comparison.

Quite frequently the title of the poem was misspelled even though it appeared on the question paper. Some candidates lost marks by writing about a poem other than the one named as their choice. Others, by speaking about rhyme and calling it metre or rhythm, showed that they did not understand the exact meanings of these terms.

In this question the key words were "attitude", "effect", and "effectiveness". Vague statements such as "the poet uses good descriptive words" and "it is a slow metre" were practically valueless.

The Destruction of Sennacherib.

Boot and Saddle.

(a) Although each of these poems deals with war, they reveal an entirely different attitude. "Destruction" is written from an admiring, awed, but impartial point of view which allows us to visualize the scene of utter desolation accomplished by the might of the Angel of the Lord. In "Boot and Saddle", the author is apparently returning from an unsuccessful civil war in which many of his men have perished. His present thoughts are for the safety of his own castle, and of his wife who is gallantly defending it. His attitude is one of forced cheerfulness, as urging his men onward he tries to buoy up their spirits with a desperate valour which in his heart has vanished.

Both poems deal with the destruction caused by war and

with the fact that one side or the other loses heavily.

(b) "Destruction" refers to the Hebrew race rescued, in an hour of peril and apparent hopelessness, from the hands of the Assyrian hordes, by the might of their God.

"Boots" refers to the English cavalier who, after waging unsuccessful warfare against the forces of Cromwell, is attempting to effect the rescue of his own castle which he had left to fight the Roundheads.

(c) The anapestic tetrameter employed by Byron creates the striking effect of the steady onslaught of the Assyrians, and also the effect of the relentless destiny which stalks and suddenly crushes them with its awesome power. The rhyme scheme a b a b, makes the action more concise and helps create the idea of the swiftness and sudden speed with which the doom of the Assyrians was sealed.

Browning pictures his soldiers as bravely singing defiance to the Roundheads as they ride. Therefore, the chorus "Boot, saddle, to horse and away" is effective as is the a a a rhyme which creates the song. The dactyllic or often irregular metre creates the impression that the singers are riding hurriedly and perhaps hesitantly to their destination.

(d) The simple diction employed by Browning is in keeping with the simple theme and forced cheerfulness of mood. Such phrases as "brightens to blue" add colour and life to the poem. The soldiers, attempting to cheer themselves, want a song with spirit and forcefulness, but, in a war song such as this, long words or poetic beauty would be out of place and ridiculous.

"Destruction", on the other hand, exemplifies the word-magic and beauty of descriptive imagery which creates such a feeling of vivid realism for the reader. Similes such as "like stars on the sea", "like the wolf on the fold", "melt like the snow", produce this vividness of comparison. "Blue wave", "purple and gold", are impressively colourful. "The rider distorted and pale", "rust on his mail", "dew on his brow" help to paint the gruesome picture of the power of the Lord on those who are his enemies.

Question 6:

In about fifteen lines relate the main incidents of the story in *one* of the following poems:

Lord Thomas and Fair Annet; The Peacock, the Turkey, and the Goose; Rosabelle; The Lady of Shalott; The Highwayman.

This question was a test of memory and recognition, basic in the study of literature. It revealed the candidates' ability to recognize and appreciate significant incidents in retelling a story. Loss of marks resulted from lack of familiarity with the story of the poem, from immaturity of style, and from poor organization of the answer. Many of the answers to this question contained absurd statements which revealed loose thinking and careless expression. The following is an example of such an answer.

> The Lady of Shalott was a weaver who spent days in a room and weaved in the form of a spider. Everything she noticed was weaved. Her work was beautiful; designed in a fashion that would take one's eye. If she were to leave this place she would be doomed. One day as she was weaving things that were noticed and weaved into the spider, she saw a mirror and herself. For the first time she saw her face. Finally, she left the place in a canoe and went down the stream or river. As she paddled along the canoe upset and she was drowned.
>
> Standing on the shore they knew what happened as the canoe of the Lady of Shalott drifted by.

Question 7. (First option):

"In most significant fiction there is a theme or basic idea."

(a) State briefly the theme or basic idea in *one* of the following short stories:

The Garden-Party (Mansfield); *A Moral Exigency* (Freeman); *Seaton's Aunt* (de la Mare).

(b) Explain clearly how the author has developed the theme in the story you have chosen. (Do not write a summary of the story.)

Most candidates chose *The Garden-Party.* Marks were lost by many candidates who ignored the admonition "Do not write a summary of the story". The answers discussing Miss Mansfield's use of contrast to develop her theme were generally well done. However, candidates might have discussed in addition to contrast, such means as setting, dialogue, character study, situations and incidents, and the orderly progression of incidents to reach a final climax. Many candidates knew the content well but had little or no conception of the techniques used by the short story writer. Candidates possessing a knowledge of the structure of the short story found this to be very helpful in answering this question.

(a) The theme of "The Garden-Party" is the absurdity of class distinctions. This story actually has very little plot; it is a slice of life showing the snobbish and the poor, and the democratic who sympathize with those outside their lot. Through the contrast between Laura and her mother and Jose, we see what an ugly thing class prejudice really is.

(b) The author develops the theme very subtly by making Laura the central figure in the story. The reader sees Laura's sympathy with others out of her class when she is horrified by the death of the carter and feels that their garden party should be postponed to prevent the gay celebrations and band from adding to the grief of the bereaved woman. In contrast with Laura we see Jose, who thinks that she is as sympathetic as Laura, but shows in every word that she cares for no one but herself and that she is absolutely hard-hearted. Her words show this when she replies to Laura, "I feel just as sympathetic as you. But you won't bring a drunken workman back to life by being sentimental".

Mrs. Sheridan is also a contrast with Laura. She tries to bribe Laura into forgetting the matter by giving her a hat, and when Laura first tells her of the accident she cries, "*Not* in the garden!" She, like Jose, cannot see beyond her own interests. She cares for no one else and tries to avoid everything unpleasant.

The contrast in description emphasizes Mansfield's theme. At the Sheridan home we see plans for a party, gaiety and the bright colours of the lilies. Everyone seems to be having a good time. At the home in the lane we see a "wretched little low kitchen" and a woman with her eyes horribly swollen and her face reddened, too miserable to speak. The contrast is striking and we immediately condemn Mrs. Sheridan and Jose for their lack of sympathy.

Lastly, Mansfield shows that death levels all social stations. Death is beautiful for the carter and Laura realizes this. She sees that he is happy and at peace, with a depth beyond her years. This gives the story a finishing touch and we realize that class distinctions mean nothing—we all reach death and it is beautiful for everyone.

Question 7. (Second option):

"The familiar, informal essay is a revelation of the writer's personality."

Show how the author has revealed his own tastes and disposition in any *one* of the following essays:

Tears (MacCarthy); *When the Rain Came* (McArthur); *On Saying "Please"* (Gardiner).

Few candidates chose the essay option and the majority of these merely gave a summary of the essay. In this question candidates frequently ignored the key words "tastes and disposition".

Pupils should be trained to make clear statements and to support them by suitable illustrations. Candidates might have discussed and illustrated the author's interest in literature, history, and current affairs, his keen observation, his sense of humour, and his interest in human nature.

Tears

MacCarthy has revealed his tastes in the examples and illustrations he uses. He shows that he is well read and educated by his examples from Dickens, Shaw and Virgil. We also learn that he knows more than common knowledge of history (English) when he tells of the incidents in parliament—when Cromwell and his parliament cried eight hours before signing the king's death warrant. This also displays an interest in the human element involved in history. MacCarthy's topic in itself reveals interest in human nature and this is further developed by his story of Rosinni—the three incidents by which Rosinni's character can be evolved.

The author offers a solution to the case of tears, bringing out even more his interest in human nature and life itself. We also learn that the author has a sense of humour in "Tears, idle tears", his experience with the man who burst into tears when he couldn't carry the author's bag, and the last sentence which tends to leave us in a good mood.

On the whole, the impression I get of the author is that he is a learned, well-read, interesting, humorous man.

Question 8. (First option):

In about fifteen lines tell the part played in the life of David Copperfield by any *one* of the following:

Mr. Murdstone, Betsey Trotwood, Steerforth, Dora.

This question was on the whole well answered. The best answers displayed a mastery of composition as well as a knowledge

of the novel. Good introductory and closing sentences along with satisfactory practice of the rules of unity, emphasis, and coherence supported by adequate knowledge of the story earned the best marks. Some candidates undertook to write on all four choices.

Poor answers consisted of vague general statements supported by a minimum of facts. Some of the candidates wrote sketchy answers seemingly derived from a comic-book version of the novel. Others told of the part played by their chosen character *in the novel* rather than *in the life* of David Copperfield.

> Mr. Murdstone was the villain of David Copperfield's childhood. His innate distrust of him turned out to be well-founded when, after Mr. Murdstone's marriage to David's mother, he would not allow David's mother to show affection for the boy, and completely made an end of the happy home life which they two had enjoyed formerly. David was unable to learn his lessons because of the formidable presence in the room of Mr. Murdstone and his sister, and these two delighted in giving him hard sums to do, and finding fault with every little detail they could, not even allowing him to associate with Peggotty any longer. Finally David was sent to Salem House, a run-down and tyrannical boy's school. the only advantages of which were that David made friends of Tommy Traddles and James Steerforth, both of whom played important parts in the life of David Copperfield in later years, particularly Steerforth. After his mother's death David was completely neglected by the Murdstones, and Mr. Murdstone finally sent him to work in the wine-trade of Murdstone and Grinby's, a degrading job for a sensitive young boy, only a child who had been carefully brought up by his mother. Here he met the Micawbers, who also have a great deal to do in connection with the life of David Copperfield in later years. But, because of his being sent there, David finally ran away to his aunt, Miss Betsey Trotwood, and entered upon a new life with which the rest of the book is involved. If it had not been for Mr. Murdstone's treatment of his mother, insisting upon such firmness, she would not have died, David probably would not have been sent to work where he was, and would in all likelihood never have met Miss Betsey in his life.

Question 8. (Second option):

"Then I laid my wife in my mother's arms . . . went forth for my revenge."

Reveal the context of this speech from the novel *Lorna Doone*

by answering each of the following questions:

(a) What incident had just taken place?

(b) Where, and in what circumstances, did this incident occur?

(c) From whom did the speaker seek revenge?

(d) How did he gain his revenge?

(e) What information is given in the novel regarding the subsequent life of John Ridd and Lorna Doone?

Most candidates who wrote on this option did well. The use of "seeked" as the past tense of seek and of "looses" as the present tense of lose cost some candidates marks. Others in answering part (e) betrayed ignorance of the meaning of "subsequent" and attempted to write a summary of the novel. Still others misread "from" in place of "for" in part (c). Too many seemed to believe that John Ridd killed Carver Doone.

Question 9:

BLUEBIRD IN OCTOBER

When the October woods in Orient dyes
Are at their peak of splendour, and the bloom
Of Indian summer lies upon the Hills,
There is a hushed expectancy, as if
Some medieval city on a morn
Emblazoned with pure gold and scarlet gems,
Waited entranced a silver trumpet call
To sound its fanfare for triumphant news.
And then across the sunburnt valley comes—
No sudden cry of any victory,
Nor answering tumult of the charmed scene—
Only, repeated like a litany
Of the fond heart, a bluebird's plaintive note,
Homesick for April, native of the Spring.

—Bliss Carman.

(a) State clearly

(i) *two* important respects in which this poem illustrates the sonnet form,

(ii) *one* important respect in which it is not typical of this form.

(b) Comment on the appropriateness, in its context, of each of the following expressions:

(i) in Orient dyes (1. 1);

(ii) like a litany (l. 12);

(iii) plaintive note (l. 13);

(c) Discuss the suitability of the comparison in lines 4-8.

(d) Point out *one* effective use of contrast in the poem.

One main purpose of the teaching of poetry is the training of the student to understand and appreciate poems which he may meet outside the pages of his text-books. In addition, the study of sight work in poetry is comparable in nature to the work in prose appreciation since both involve the study of content, form, and style. In view of the foregoing there was disappointment at the calibre of the answers to this question, which is based on a pleasant and comparatively simple piece of Canadian poetry. More practice in answering sight questions on poetry during the term seems to be desirable. This might be done by putting an untaught poem from the prescribed section of Shorter Poems on every term examination and then teaching the poem when taking up the paper.

Some candidates did not distinguish between the words "contrast" and "comparison". The terms quatrain and rhymed couplet were used without any evidence that the candidate knew what they meant.

Quite a number ignored the word "comment" in part *(b)* and merely wrote a paraphrase. Many considered "plaintive" to mean unadorned or plain, such as the candidate who answered part *(b)* (iii) as follows,—"Plaintive note is also a very beautiful expression to use as the song of the bluebird does not contain many high trills which are very melodious such as the nightingale but has a plain note."

The failure to read and understand the question properly was again apparent here particularly in part *(c)* where "lines 4-8" was taken to refer to lines 4 *and* 8 respectively. The words "suitability" in part *(c)* and "effective" in part *(d)* were often ignored.

9. *(a)* (i) This poem has fourteen lines. The break in thought or mood comes at the end of the eighth line when the waiting silence is broken. This division into eight and six lines is like that in a Wordsworthian sonnet.

(ii) The lines of this poem do not rhyme, while those of a sonnet ordinarily do.

(b) (i) "In Orient dyes"

The word "Orient" brings to mind the idea of deep, rich

colours, such as may be found in rugs or paintings of Oriental design. It is for this reason that this particular word is used to describe the woods in order to emphasize their varied colouring at this particular season of the year. This idea is further emphasized by the mention of the specific colours, gold and scarlet.

(ii) "Like a litany"

A litany is a chant or prayer which is repeated over and over again. In comparing the sound of the bird to a litany, Carman brings out the idea of the bluebird's homesickness as he repeats over and over again his wish for the Spring.

(iii) "plaintive note"

This expression is very appropriate, giving, as it does, the idea of sadness and longing which is present in the bluebird's song in October.

(c) The comparison in lines 4-8 is very apt. In Indian Summer the world really is very quiet and the flaming red and yellow leaves make the trees look like some enchanted city in whose walls are gold and scarlet gems. The trees are quiet, as if waiting for something, and the comparison of them to a city waiting for triumphal news is very suitable.

(d) There is a contrast between what the trees seem to be waiting for and what they actually hear. They seem to be waiting for something like the silver bugle call in a medieval city to announce triumphal news, but in reality they hear the plaintive song of the bluebird, "homesick for April".

2. THE ENGLISH COMPOSITION EXAMINATION OF 1950

The following comments on the Upper School examination of 1950 in English Composition are made in the hope that they may prove useful to teachers of this subject. It should be understood, however, that the allotment of marks and the method of marking employed in this examination will not necessarily apply in future examinations.

These marks were assigned to the various parts of the paper:

The Essay	70 marks
The Vocabulary	10 marks
The Appreciation	20 marks
Total	100 marks

I. General Comment

Candidates again missed first class honours frequently because of their inability to meet the requirements of the question on vocabulary. Spelling errors averaged slightly over three per paper and spelling still remains a factor in the failure of some papers which would otherwise have received a pass. Many pupils found the question on Appreciation more difficult than the Précis question of 1948 and 1949.

II. Question 1, The Essay—70 marks.

1. The standards for the grading of the essay were substantially the same as those given in the 1945 Memorandum, which were as follows:

Essays comparatively free from errors but commonplace might receive from 35-41 marks.

Essays which were still commonplace, but revealed some power of organization and had some merit in either content or style might receive from 42-45 marks.

Those in the next higher grade, 46-52 marks showed definite merit in content or style, were competently handled and interesting.

We now come to the first class honour essays from 53-70 marks. These essays showed definite merit in content and style. A thoughtful essay written in a plain, straight-forward style was given first class honours. An essay to be worth this grade was required to interest the reader.

Essays which were attractive and meritorious, had good content, some consciousness of word values, and effective sentence structure received from 53-58 marks.

Essays which were excellent in both content and style and showed comprehensive and intimate knowledge of subject matter, freshness of thought, skill in arrangement, command of sentence structure (variety, emphasis, smoothness) and consciousness of word values received from 59-64 marks.

Distinguished essays which showed marked individuality in content and style received from 65-70 marks.

N.B. Passing grades were given for positive merits; less than 50% was given an essay with serious defects. The essay was not graded on correctness alone; the student was required to have something to say.

An essay with three major errors of different types, many

examples of a single major error, or frequent minor errors of different types was placed below 50% unless it possessed compensating merits.

2. It is recommended that candidates observe carefully the number of words required. Some essays are noticeably brief and some are so long that candidates have not the time to correct errors in them. The candidates were asked to write 300-400 words in the essay. No pupil, however, was penalized for not complying with the minimum number of words if his essay possessed other merits. The fact that the percentage of failures is no higher than in recent years indicates that candidates did not suffer appreciably from this extension of length.

3. Many essays are quite irrelevant: many topics seem to have been deliberately twisted to suit the whims of the candidates. Candidates should be warned to use the titles as given on the examination paper and to adhere to the topics. When candidates make use of original titles, there is great danger of developing some aspects of the subject which may cause the writers to wander from the topic assigned and thus lose marks for deviation.

Candidates should be advised not to attempt to fit a previously prepared essay to a title given in the examination paper.

4. Most candidates would improve their essays by doing more rough work on the blank pages of the examination book: a plan of the essay should be drawn up and at least the introductory and concluding paragraph written out in the rough. The rough work should be written in ink and should be legible. Many marks are lost because of the lack of planning and because of the untidy writing employed in rough work.

5. Improvement in paragraphing is noticeable this year, but there is still a tendency among candidates to use too many very brief paragraphs.

6. Punctuation is still weak in many instances; there is frequent misuse of the comma and the semicolon, and failure to use the apostrophe correctly causes the candidate to lose marks. There is an improvement in the use of quotation marks.

7. The most frequent mechanical errors continue to be the comma blunder, failure to make the verb agree with the subject, the use of the wrong case after prepositions, the incomplete sentence, faulty subordination, and lack of parallelism.

8. Students should be warned to avoid the use of slang and colloquialisms. It is feared that the pupils who use careless language in everyday speech are often careless in writing and there-

fore lose marks. On the other hand, artificial, stilted expressions detract from the effectiveness of the essay.

9. A sincere lively style is still the desirable ideal for which the candidate should strive.

10. Some of the criticisms of submitted essays are as follows:

(a) How some people have influenced me.

Some students wrote general essays on the influence of parents, teachers, and friends but did not apply this influence to themselves.

(b) The value of useless knowledge.

There was some confusion in the interpretation of this topic and the weaker essays tended to be rather vague and incoherent.

(c) How to buy a used car.

The most satisfactory essays were those which contained a good deal of information without any particular style of writing; they were merely clear informative accounts. This subject suited many boys whose knowledge of used cars was extensive. The weaker essays on this subject failed to contain sufficient reasonable advice.

(d) An adventure in hiking.

Candidates who wrote planned narratives on this subject often obtained high marks. Unplanned essays produced rambling efforts, some of which were pointless and some highly melodramatic. The word hiking was loosely interpreted by many candidates.

(e) Do the movies misrepresent life?

Some very good essays were submitted by thoughtful students on this topic. Poorer essays dealt with the influence of movies and made little attempt to cope logically with the subject.

(f) Birds, useful and harmful.

Candidates who had studied birds offered highly informative and interesting essays on this subject. Candidates without sufficient knowledge were unwise to attempt this subject.

(g) What I am, compared with what I want to be.

Scholarship students presented some logical and carefully considered essays on this subject. Borderline essays

failed to draw a sharp contrast between these two ideas; some were merely "career essays."

(h) Picnics are fun.
Many essays on this topic were interesting and gave scope to students who could utilize incidents of picnics to prove their opinions that "Picnics are fun". On the other hand, many essays on this topic were dull, commonplace, and trite and were examples of rambling narratives quite mediocre in style.

(i) What is good citizenship?
Some candidates submitted expository essays which were worthy of high standing. Other candidates wrote essays which dealt only superficially with the subject. Undigested ideas and lack of organization marred such essays.

Although some essays written this year were brilliant, interesting, and informative, there were many essays which were immature and juvenile.

11. The following essay was given a mark of 70:

PICNICS ARE FUN

Yes indeed, there's no doubt about it! Picnics *are* fun. And everybody knows it, except perhaps a few professional pessimists who have traded their humanity for some worthless coin, intellectual or otherwise. Why are picnics fun? This is a question that has stumped philosophers for centuries, even those philosophers who have made the solution the sole object of their quest. Kant, in his "Critique of Pure Reason," did not come close to an answer. Plato, in his "Republic," feared even to broach the question. More, in his "Utopia" (and what could be more important to such a theme?), ignored the topic of picnics entirely. It may be argued that Leacock in his "Sunshine Sketches" treated of picnics, but his treatment was far from exhaustive. Leacock did, however, make a valuable contribution. He discovered that the answer is not to be found in a syllogism.

As a tentative examination of the subject, let us remark first what might be called the "benificium universum" of picnics. It is true that most benefit is derived by children, two species of ants, and the manufacturers of "No Trespassing" signs. Nevertheless, who will deny that latent in every adult is the seed, the germ of childhood. The problem is, to reap the fruit before it becomes over-ripe in senility.

Picnics are to normal, gregarious human beings what solo excursions are to poets, and levitations to yogis. In the normal course of a day, the picnicker has the same experience as the poet (although ignorant of the fact that he is "communing with nature",), and his heart feels so light that the levitations of the yogi are nothing in comparison. The poet expresses the result of his experience in an ode or a sonnet. The picnicker does the same thing by an esoteric art known as conversation. To all but the initiated his remarks seem banal. Woe to those who would depreciate them! As for the yogi, he usually has nothing to show but a lump on the head. For would-be poets or yogis who lack the requisite "celestial fire" or physical stamina (respectively), picnics are ideal substiuttes.

The foregoing explanation of the popularity of picnics has one drawback. It does not show the reason for the popularity of picnics among those who do not aspire to poesy or yogism. Only one completely satisfying explanation is possible. This explanation depends upon an axiom: That which is something, is something by the mere fact of its being something. To illustrate: Love is good, only because it is per se good. Hate is evil, not because of its effects, or because the cost of living index is 169. Hate per se is evil.

In the same manner it may be said that picnics per se are fun. The simplicity of this concept is such that it evades the erudite mind, and is grasped only by the simple mind. But don't take my word for it. Try it yourself. A picnic, that is.

III. *Question 2, Vocabulary—10 marks*

1. Two marks were given for each definition, 10 marks in all.

2. A word defined in terms of itself received no mark, except when the word was properly qualified; for example, "harangued—gave a harangue to"; but "harangued—gave a harangue to, delivered a violent speech to" earned 2 marks.

3. A reasonable approximation to an accurate definition received 1 mark; for example, "perfunctory—brief."

4. Meanings in the form of a word, a phrase, or a sentence were acceptable.

5. Candidates who used a sentence form of answer sometimes committed major errors in sentence structure and therefore lost marks; for example, "harangued—The speaker rose the tempo fervour."

6. The candidate was not required to name the part of speech, but he was required to explain the word as the proper part of speech. If the candidate defined the word correctly as another part of speech, 1 mark was given; for example, "platitudinous—a trite remark"—1 mark.

IV. *Question 3, The Appreciation—20 marks*

1. Twelve marks were assigned for matter and 8 marks for style, 20 marks in all.

2. Matter

To receive full marks for matter, the candidate was required to call attention to any 12 of the following points. These points were not necessarily arranged under headings.

(a) Structure of the Paragraph

The paragraph has unity. All the descriptive details refer to the effect of the storm (or develop the implications of the topic sentence)—1 mark.
The paragraph is coherent. Details are given in a clear, progressive order, and the point of view, of a person in the room, is consistently maintained. First the scene within is described; then, after the shutters burst, the scene without.—1 mark.
Emphasis in the paragraph is achieved by the arrangement of the details in such a way as to suggest increasing violence and excitement.—1 mark.

(b) Sentence Structure

The use of short, sharp sentences to give details in rapid succession, conveying a sense of movement and urgency —1 mark. The occasional use of longer sentences to give a more complex impression or to suggest action continuing for some time.—1 mark.

(c) Language

The use of familiar, concrete, occasionally colloquial diction.—1 mark.
The use of words suggesting movement.—1 mark.
Sparing but effective use of adjectives (e.g. "bouncing" rain, "tired" elephants.)—1 mark.
The use of various sound devices, alliteration, imitative harmony, assonance.—1 mark.

(d) Imagery

Clear word-pictures (or visual images).—1 mark.

Use of fresh, vivid metaphors and similes.—1 mark.
Use of imaginative personification ("The wind occupied the room", etc.)—1 mark.
Use of specific detail to sharpen the effect or to give a humorous touch.—1 mark.
Use of local colour.—1 mark.

Note—Credit should be given for the discussion of defects as well as merits. For example, if the candidate points out that there is no direct reference to the sound of the wind.—1 mark.

3. Style

(a) Full marks should be given for a concise, coherent, competent style free from errors.

(b) Two marks should be deducted for the first major error and 1 mark for each subsequent major error of a different type up to a maximum of 6 marks. Minor errors should also reduce the mark.

(c) Repetition, irrelevancy, and verbiage should be penalized.

4. The following appreciation was assigned 19 out of 20 marks—11 marks for matter and 8 marks for style:

THE APPRECIATION

The topic of these eleven sentences is stated directly in the first and topic sentence—the high wind and its consequences. Unity is achieved by keeping the scene all inside the house, and by dealing with nothing but the storm. Definite picture order in the description, as well as a certain amount of time order (in mentioning the "by now", and the order in which the shutters broke, the rain poured in, and the devastation ensued) lends coherence to the passage. Most emphatic and interesting is the use of figurative language. Such unusual and vivid similes as "as if tired elephants were leaning against them", and "as close as a rabbit lays back his ears" are matched by ingenious metaphors like "the bouncing rain", as though the rain-drops were rubber balls. The use of short key sentences to separate the various pictures is also noteworthy. The brief opening sentence introduces the preparations against the storm; sentence four, especially emphatic with its order of climax—"The handkerchief, shutters, everything burst" ushers in the rain's onslaught. Sentence six marks out the de-

scription of the havoc outside; the use of "without" for outside" is unusual, but much more effective. Sentence twelve introduces the final picture, in which the wind began to blow the child and his mother away. Personification is frequent: the branches were *leaping* about, the wind *snatched* the pictures—as if the aspects of Nature were living things. Descriptive adjectives are few, but striking verbs are many—the negroes *wallowed;* the mother went *bowling* along like a ball, and finally *fetched up* against a wall. The unusual use of "clean" for an adverb in "clean gone", "clean away", adds a breathless touch. The diction is exceptionally well chosen, and with all its beauty and use of literary devices, still the paragraph retains a conversational flavour; the author seems to be telling the story quite informally. Only the most outstanding details are described, the creepers, the bushes and branches—since these would be the most obvious through the torrent of rain. The description is extremely realistic, and the idea of destruction and wreckage is always secondary to that of the wild beauty of the tornado. It would have been very easy to make the reader sympathize deeply with the negroes whose homes were ruined, and who had to crawl through the storm for shelter, but the description of the mother's being blown up against the wall makes one laugh in spite of its tragedy for the woman. The paragraph ends on an optimistic note; everyone had reached shelter; but it excites curiosity in the reader: what happens to the "beldam"? was the house destroyed too? Thus the description is complete in itself, but leaves one wanting more, and than this last there could not be a better proof of its excellence.

V. *Spelling*

In the English Composition paper the words most frequently misspelled were found to be these: accept, accidentally, accommodate, alliteration, awhile, belief, bedlam, benefit, coherence, concise, criticize, eligible, emphasis, endeavour, exaggerate, except, fictitious, fourth, heroes, handkerchief, humorous, imitative, irrelevant, its, it's, merciless, metaphor, municipal, negroes, noticeable, occurrence, peculiarly, picknicking, precede, privilege, raucous, repetition, requisite, resemble, rhythm, simile, suspense, syllable, systematic, their, there, truly, tornado, twelfth, weird.

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